

Weigh Your Waste: Volunteer Instructions

General Overview: This campaign aims to raise awareness about food waste. During lunch, students will sort their waste into 5 bins: edible food waste, non-edible food waste (bones, shells, etc.), compostable non-edibles (napkins, to-go cups and lids, etc.), liquid waste, and trash. The purpose is to highlight food waste without shaming individuals. Please consider that some people may struggle with food-related anxiety and eating disorders. We are not here to dictate dietary choices but to collectively address food waste awareness.

Sign-Up as Volunteers for the Weigh Your Waste Initiative Below!

- [Week of April 8: Hopkins Café](#)
- [Week of April 15: Nolan's](#)
- [Week of April 22: Peabody](#)

There are 3 primary volunteer roles:

1. **Sort:** Stand behind the table and assist students in sorting their food into the correct bins. **Edible Leftovers** include food that could have been eaten (including soup), while **Non-Edible Leftovers** comprise items like bones and peels. **Compostable Non-Edibles** include napkins, to-go containers/cups (although there should be very few, if any), teabags, and any paper packets like sugar). **Liquids** refers to beverages, and **Trash** encompasses other items like plastic sachets. Ensure students sort their waste accurately and efficiently. You may assist students during busy periods but encourage self-sorting.
2. **Enforce:** Ensure students do not place full plates on the conveyor belt and guide them to dispose of their waste properly. Participating in Weigh Your Waste is not optional. Educate students about the purpose of the event and redirect those with full plates to the sorting line. Engage with interested or confused students about the campaign.
3. **Scale Check:** Volunteers need to ensure the weighing scales remain active throughout the event. The scales automatically turn off after two minutes of inactivity. You can prevent this by periodically pressing down on the weighing scales to keep them active, ensuring accurate measurements of waste.

Challenges and How to Handle Them:

- **Dealing with Impatient Students:** Volunteers may encounter students who are or impatient or do not want to participate. In such cases, volunteers should remain polite and briefly explain the purpose of the event and how it contributes to Johns Hopkins' sustainability goals. Remind students of the importance of collective efforts in reducing food waste. If you still run into issues, offer to take their plate for them and sort it yourself – but this should be a last effort.
- **Incorrect Sorting:** Some students may throw trash in the wrong bin. Be on the lookout and gently correct students if they start sorting incorrectly. If you miss something, don't worry - use gloves and a spoon to transfer the misplaced items to the correct bin. Gentle reminders about proper sorting can help prevent further mistakes.

- **Waste Disposal:** Volunteers are required to double bag the big containers before throwing in waste. The green container is for Edible Leftovers, Non-Edible Leftovers, and Compostable Non-Edibles. The grey container is only for Trash. Since the bags will be heavy, they may tear so they are only put in a single bag. Volunteers may need to repeat this process as more waste is generated, disposing of it in batches. Location staff will be available to take care of final disposal. Please alert a manager if you need assistance.
- **Thinking on Your Feet:** Volunteers may encounter unexpected issues during the event. It's essential for volunteers to think quickly and adapt to ensure the event runs smoothly. Clear communication among volunteers can help address any challenges efficiently.

Ensure gloves are worn throughout your shift, changing them halfway through to maintain cleanliness.

All volunteers are expected to assist with sorting, enforcement, and crowd control as necessary to prevent bottlenecks.

Typical Answers to Student Questions:

1. **What are you doing?** This is a Food Waste Awareness event. Please sort your food into specific categories so we can record how much food we waste during lunch. Our goal is to encourage mindful consumption without shaming anyone, so we only take an average – we don't record your personal waste!
2. **How long are you doing this?** This project runs during Earth Month but may continue in the future to monitor progress and explore ways to reduce food waste.
3. **When can we see how much food we had left over?** Final tallies will be posted soon on social media!
4. **How can I get involved?** Join our sustainability Slack channels or email Graham Browning, the Sustainability Manager for Hopkins Dining, at graham.browning@jhu.edu.

Additional Facts About Food Waste:

- \$218 billion worth of edible food is thrown away annually.
- 72 billion pounds of food is lost each year, excluding household waste.
- Landfills receive 21% of food waste, contributing to methane emissions.
- 21% of fresh water used for food production is wasted.
- Food waste costs the US economy one trillion dollars yearly.
- Food production contributes to environmental degradation.
- The average American family spends \$1500 annually on wasted food.